

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 03530

E.O. 11652: GDR
TAGS: PGOV, GW, SU,GE
SUBJECT: GDR CONTACTS ON BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO BONN AND ON
INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS.

REF: BERLIN 586

SUMMARY: IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS MAY 16 AND 19, THE
CHIEF OF THE GDR MFA'S WEST GERMAN SECTION AND A MEMBER
OF THE INSTITUTE FOR POLITICS AND ECONOMICS (IPW) GAVE A
CAUTIOUSLY FAVORABLE - IF GENERAL - APPRAISAL OF BREZHNEV'S
VISIT TO BONN. IN THEIR VIEW, THE IMPORTANCE OF BREZHNEV'S
VISIT LIES MORE IN TERMS OF THE POLITICAL STABILITY IT
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IMPLIED FOR FUTURE FRG-SOVIET RELATIONS THAN IN TERMS OF
IMMEDIATE TANGIBLE RESULTS. THEY IMPLIED THE BREZHNEV
VISIT WOULD NOT LEAD TO ANY ACCELERATION (OR DECELERATION)
IN EAST GERMAN-WEST GERMAN RELATIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
THEY WERE CAUTIOUS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A HONECKER-
SCHMIDT VISIT THIS YEAR - IN PART BECAUSE OF THE SIGNALS
THIS MIGHT CONVEY TO THE POPULATION IN BOTH GERMANIES.

END SUMMARY.

1. BREZHNEV'S BONN VISIT. DURING A MAY 16 MEETING, KARL SEIDEL, CHIEF OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S WEST GERMAN SECTION, SPOKE IN POSITIVE BUT GENERAL TERMS ABOUT THE RESULTS OF BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO BONN AND ABOUT THE NEAR-TERM COURSE OF FRG-GDR RELATIONS. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM THE DCM, SEIDEL TERMED BREZHNEV'S VISIT AS GOOD FOR EUROPE, FOR THE GDR, AND FOR EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN GENERAL. IN THIS CONNECTION, SEIDEL POINTED TO THE FRG-USSR LONG-TERM ECONOMIC AGREEMENT, ASSERTING ITS IMPORTANCE LAY LESS IN ITS ECONOMIC PROVISIONS THAN IN THE POLITICAL TONE OF STABILITY IT SET FOR FRG-USSR RELATIONS THROUGH THE END OF THE CENTURY. KOSIN, A MEMBER OF IPW WHO SPECIALIZES IN INNER-GERMAN AFFAIRS, MADE THE SAME POINT TO THE DCM AT LUNCH MAY 19, NOTING AT THE SAME TIME THE TRIP DID NOT SEEM TO PRODUCE VERY MUCH IN THE WAY OF SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS.

2. SCHMIDT-HONECKER MEETING. CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF THE BREZHNEV VISIT ON FRG-GDR RELATIONS, SEIDEL HIMSELF RAISED THE MATTER OF A SCHMIDT-HONECKER MEETING. WHILE NOTING THAT THE BREZHNEV-SCHMIDT MEETING HAD, IN EFFECT, SET A GOOD PRECEDENT, SEIDEL SAID HE COULD GIVE NO INDICATION OF THE POSSIBLE DATE, PLACE OR EVEN IF A MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE THIS YEAR. HE SAID THE NECESSARY

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PRECONDITIONS WOULD HAVE TO EXIST FIRST AND THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE INDICATIONS OF POSITIVE RESULTS FROM SUCH MEETING. BUT HE WOULD NOT SPECULATE ON WHAT PRECONDITIONS OR RESULTS THE GDR WOULD LOOK FOR.

3. KOSIN, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS SOMEWHAT MORE SKEPTICAL ABOUT A SCHMIDT-HONECKER MEETING THIS YEAR. GIVEN THE SOVIET UNION'S SUPER POWER POSITION, BREZHNEV COULD GET AWAY WITH A VISIT TO BONN WITHOUT HAVING TO SHOW TOO MUCH IN THE WAY OF CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENTS. THE SAME WAS NOT TRUE FOR EITHER SCHMIDT OR HONECKER IN TERMS OF WHAT THEIR POPULATIONS WOULD EXPECT FROM A HIGH-LEVEL MEETING. KOSIN WONDERED WHETHER THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH IN THE WAY OF SPECIFIC RESULTS TO JUSTIFY A MEETING. IN RESPONSE TO AN OBSERVATION THAT THE WEST GERMAN PRESS WAS WRITING THAT A LOWERING OF THE ELIGIBLE AGE FOR GDR CITIZENS TO TRAVEL WOULD BE ONE RESULT SCHMIDT MIGHT WANT FROM A MEETING, KOSIN SAID THIS WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION AT PRESENT. KOSIN THOUGHT THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD WANT TO HAVE A HALF-DOZEN OR SO SPECIFIC RESULTS AND HE EXPRESSED DOUBT AS TO WHAT THESE COULD BE.

4. FRG-GDR RELATIONS. BOTH SEIDEL AND KOSIN EXPRESSED THEMSELVES IN GUARDEDLY POSITIVE TERMS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRG-GDR RELATIONS. BOTH NOTED THAT SUCH BASIC QUESTIONS AS CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY REMAINED TO BE RESOLVED, AND NEITHER THOUGHT THIS WAS LIKELY OVER THE NEXT TERM. AT THE SAME TIME, NEITHER THOUGHT THIS WOULD HAVE A BEARING ON THE ABILITY OF THE FRG AND GDR TO REACH AGREEMENT ON SPECIFIC ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST. KOSIN THOUGHT IN GENERAL THAT INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS WOULD DEVELOP AT A "MILIMETER" PACE.

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5. CONCERNING THE VARIOUS INNER-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS, SEIDEL NOTED THESE WERE GOING FORWARD ON SCHEDULE WITH THE RETURN OF GAUS FROM LEAVE. SEIDEL SAID THE BORDER COMMISSION WOULD MEET MAY 17 (IT DID), AND HE WAS RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC THAT A SOLUTION OF REMAINING PROBLEMS SATISFACTORY TO BOTH SIDES COULD BE FOUND THIS YEAR.

6. ON THE BERLIN-HAMBURG AUTOBAHN PROJECT, SEIDEL SAID

TALKS WERE CONTINUING AND INDICATED THAT NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT START LATER THIS YEAR. WHILE NOTING THE IMPORTANCE OF FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT, SEIDEL AT THE SAME TIME SAID IT WOULD BE BASICALLY A POLITICAL DECISION ON WHETHER CONFIDENTIAL

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OR NOT TO GO AHEAD. KOSIN EVEN MORE THAN SEIDEL STRESSED THE POLITICAL SYMBOLISM OF SUCH A PROJECT IN TERMS OF (1) WHAT IT WOULD SAY ABOUT WEST BERLIN CONNECTIONS WITH THE FRG AND ABOUT FRG-GDR RELATIONS IN GENERAL. KOSIN NOTED THAT "OFFICIAL" MENTION OF THE PROJECT WOULD BE MADE IN A MAY 22 MEETING BETWEEN GAUS AND HIS EAST GERMAN PARTNER, AND WENT ON TO INDICATE THAT WHATEVER STRATEGIC RESERVATIONS MAY HAVE EXISTED (WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO NATO ELEMENTS AS OPPOSED TO THE SOVIETS) NO LONGER PLAYED A ROLE.

7. BOTH SEIDEL AND KOSIN, IN TALKING ABOUT THE ROUTE THE AUTOBAHN MIGHT TAKE, EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT IT SHOULD RUN (1) AS FAR AS POSSIBLE IN THE GDR (AND HELP "OPEN UP" THE SCHWERIN DISTRICT), AND (2) AVOID LOWER SAXONY; THEY WOULD, THEREFORE, PREFER A MORE NORTHERLY ROUTE. SEIDEL CLAIMED THE EAST GERMANS HAD NOT EXPRESSED TO THE WEST GERMANS ANY ROUTE PREFERENCE, AND SAID THAT IN VIEW OF THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS IN LOWER SAXONY IN EARLY JUNE THE GDR WOULD NOT SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE MATTER.

8. ON OTHER ITEMS, SEIDEL SAID THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY THAT THE SPIEGEL OFFICE IN EAST BERLIN COULD BE REOPENED IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE BECAUSE OF ITS CONTINUING ANTI-GDR ARTICLES. SEIDEL ALSO SAID HE STOOD BY HIS EARLIER ASSESSMENT OF THE LAND ELECTIONS IN JUNE AND OCTOBER OF THIS YEAR (REFTEL).

9. AN AMERICAN PROFESSOR, TEACHING AT HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY IN EAST BERLIN, CLAIMS THAT HIS EAST GERMAN COLLEAGUES ALL WONDER WHAT GDR INTERESTS BREZHNEV GAVE AWAY IN BONN, AND THEY ASSUME GROMYKO CAME TO EAST BERLIN TO EXPLAIN WHAT THESE WERE. APART FROM THIS CYNICAL REACTION, WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING MORE FROM EAST BERLIN GDR CONTACTS ABOUT BREZHNEV'S VISIT.

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10. COMMENT: THE RELATIVE CAUTION ABOUT THE PACE AT WHICH INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS MIGHT DEVELOP AND A CONCERN ABOUT

GIVING A WRONG POLITICAL SIGNAL BY HAVING THEM DEVELOP
IN TOO VISIBLE A MANNER WERE THE MOST NOTEWORTHY ASPECTS
OF THE CONVERSATIONS WITH SEIDEL AND KOSIN. BOLEN

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